Men warned to examine the Ground of their Religion;

OR,

False Foundations removed,

AND THE TRUE ONE POINTED OUT;

A SERMON:

Preached in the Cathedral Church, *Norwich*,

On Sunday, October 17th, 1790.

By W. HURN,

VICAR OF DEBENHAM, AND CHAPLAIN TO HER GRACE THE DUTCHESS DOWAGER OF CHANDOS.

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If the FOUNDATIONS be destroyed, what can the Righteous do? Psalm xi. 3.

Except the LORD BUILD the HOUSE, they labour in vain that build it. Ps. cxxvii. 1.

Nevertheless the FOUNDATION of GOD standeth SURE, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

The NAME of the LORD is a strong TOWER: the Righteous runneth into it and is SAFE. Prov. xviii. 10.

Through Wisdom is an HOUSE BUILDED; and by understanding it is ESTABLISHED; and by Knowledge shall the CHAMBERS be FILLED with all precious and pleasant Riches. Prov. xxiv. 3, 4.

Hearken unto me, ye that know Righteousness, the People in whose Heart is my Law; Fear ye not the Reproach of Men, neither be ye afraid of their Revilings: for the Moth shall eat them up like a Garment, and the Worm shall eat them like Wool; but MY RIGHTEOUSNESS shall be for EVER, and MY SALVATION from GENERATION to GENERATION. Is. li. 7, 8.

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False Foundations removed, &c.

1. CORINTHIANS, iii. 11.

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST.

THE Scriptures expreſsly aſſure us, that *the carnal mind* (the *mind* of man by *nature*) *is enmity againſt God.* Rom. viii. 7. One ſtriking proof of this awful truth is the proneneſs there is in men to oppoſe the religion which God has revealed, and to *ſet at nought all His counſel.* Prov. i. 25. Why did the *Gentiles*, both learned and illiterate, worſhip ſtocks and ſtones, deify and adore the vileſt luſts and paſſions, when the true God was proclaimed to them by His works in the viſible creation, a volume which exhibits in legible characters *His eternal Power and Godhead?*—It was the pride of building on their own wiſdom, and ſetting up their own corrupt inventions, by which they *became vain in their imagination, and their fooliſh heart was darkened: profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe they became fools.* Rom. i. 20, &c. Why do ſo many of our ableſt philoſophers, and others who are moſt eminent for human learning, take offence at and reject the plaineſt truths of the goſpel? It is doubtleſs owing to the ſame cauſe. They are too wiſe in their own eſteem to receive inſtruction even from God himſelf, when it croſſes their carnal prejudices; and will readily adopt the vain and diſcordant fancies of creatures like themſelves before the infallible *word* which diſcovers their folly. And thus they are *ſpoiled through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt.* Col. ii. 8. Nor can it be otherwiſe with thoſe who make ſo blind and variable a thing as human reaſon a ſtandard of religious truth; and who depend on themſelves for that ſpiritual rectitude, which none by nature have poſſeſſed ſince the fall. The *ſcripture* frequently warns us againſt this common deluſion, pronouncing *Woe unto them that are wiſe in their own eyes, and prudent in their own ſight.*

Is. v. 21. Prov. iii. 7. For the intellectual faculties of man are enfeebled and perverted through original depravity. Satan also has from thence a power of acting on our corrupt inclinations; and from this two-fold source have arisen the innumerable errors, shocking opinions, abominable superstitions and idolatries which have overspread both the *Heathen* and the *Christian* world; and been received by many who stood foremost in *worldly* science; *for the world by wisdom know not God.* 1 Cor. i. 21. If it be further asked, What is the reason that many, who profess to receive the Bible as a divine revelation, and the only standard of truth, do nevertheless oppose certain doctrines which are most evidently taught there? The answer is much the same in substance as before. Instead of *denying*, they *trust in themselves*, and have never *obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which is delivered them in the* Bible, or *been taught the truth as it is in Jesus* with entire submission, and a *single eye* to His testimony: and thus by *leaning to their own understanding*, which, without grace, is enmity against the humbling truths of the gospel, *the light within them becomes darkness.* Rom. vi. 17. Prov. iii. 5. Luke xi. 34, 35. As they cannot bear to renounce that *wisdom* which God *hath made foolish, destroyed*, and *brought to nothing*, they strive to plan ways of acceptance, and establish grounds of confidence which God hath never authorized,—yea, has forbidden as destructive and impossible; for *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* 1 Cor. i. 19, 20.

In enlarging upon the words, I propose first, to point out several false foundations, and in what sense they cannot be laid. Secondly, to observe what the true foundation is, and that this is already laid. And lastly, to consider some excellent properties of this foundation which may encourage us to build upon it, and from which we may judge whether we have done so, or not.

First, I am to point out several false foundations, and in what sense they cannot be laid. The foundation is the main thing in a building, being that on which all the other parts rest, and are supported. If this fail, they cannot hold together. So in religion there are fundamental, or first principles, which being omitted, the whole spiritual edifice

nen endeavour to erect muſt fall to the ground, and the la-bour of the builders will be as impotent and vain as the at-empt of thoſe once employed at *Babel*. To be more parti-ular: Such as ground their religion upon *human wiſdom* nd *ſtrength*, on any *external privileges*, or any *works* and *ighteouſneſs* of a *creature*, lay the foundation in error, and uild to their own confuſion and ruin.

Something has been already ſaid to ſhew the miſerable lindneſs and inſufficiency of *human wiſdom*. Never could ny by their natural powers alone find out God, and the rue way of ſerving Him. And where men are favoured ith revelation, and the plaineſt *outward* teaching, their atural abilities alone are totally inſufficient to lead them in-o the truth, or enable them to receive it. How were our ord's diſcourſes received, who *ſpake as never man ſpake*? The proud Scribes, with the ſelf-wiſe and ſelf-righteous of ll ranks, counted *Himſelf* a *deceiver*, and His *preaching fool-ſhneſs*; the neighbourhood where he was ſo often heard, *were ffended at Him*; many of his profeſſed *diſciples*, after a time, alled His doctrines *hard ſayings*, and *went back* from fol-owing Him; and his very *brethren* (ſome of his carnal re-tions) *believed not in Him*. John vii. 5, 12, 46, 47.—vi. 0, 66. Mark vi. 3. However eloquent, clear, and in-efatigable miniſters may be in preaching, yet, as we are aught in this chapter, it is God alone who *gives the increaſe*; or *we are God's huſbandry and God's building*. And from he preceding chapter we learn that the *faith* of a Chriſtian *ands not in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God*. ecauſe *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit f God; for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know em, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*. From hence it certain, that we muſt be enlightened, and have a ſpiritual culty from God himſelf, before our minds *can* perceive and liſh ſpiritual truths, as the doctrines of the goſpel are; for e *words of Chriſt, they are ſpirit, and they are life*. They e ſuch to our ſouls only as applied by the Spirit, who *re-iveth of the things of Chriſt, and ſhews them unto us*. John . 63.—xvi. 14. All which is a confirmation of what is ſewhere aſſerted, that *there is none that underſtandeth*; or as the knowledge of true religion in a ſtate of nature, and the mere exertion of human abilities. Many have fine

natural endowments, and become eminently wiſe in a worldly ſenſe, and in temporal things,—able ſtateſmen; excellent mathematicians, ingenious poets, artificers, &c. but how far theſe attainments are from that *ſpiritual* knowledge, and that *heavenly* wiſdom, which the meaneſt and moſt illiterate of Chriſt's *true* followers poſſeſſes, may be gathered from what is written a few verſes after the text: *Let no man deceive himſelf: if any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a* FOOL *that he may be* WISE. *For the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God.*

Let men go to the very utmoſt reach of their *natural* powers unaſſiſted by *grace*, yet the ſum of all is, and in due time will appear to be *fooliſhneſs with God.* Therefore no man can lay a foundation here: it is impoſſible to ground religion upon them with ſafety, or ſucceſs. Amongſt the numberleſs errors to which men are liable through the depravity of their nature, theſe are very common. They are ſtrangers to the power, and often deny the very being of the *ſin that dwelleth in them.* Rom. vii. 17. They imagine it is in their own power to be *good*, and to do things *acceptable* with God, without any inward change, or renovation of the heart; that outward duties and forms, connected with moral honeſty and a ſober conduct, are ſufficient: or, that God is *all* mercy to the excluſion of His truth and juſtice, and to the rendering void all that Chriſt hath *done* and *ſuffered in the fleſh.* As to the true people of God, who under a ſenſe of their *evil nature* are brought to *abhor* and *deny themſelves*, to ſeek all their *righteouſneſs and ſtrength* in the *Saviour*, all their happineſs in communion with their Heavenly Father, counting *His loving kindneſs better than life*; whoſe daily and habitual practice is to *watch and pray that they enter not into temptation*; who ſtrive againſt *ſin* in their *hearts* as well as in their *lives*, and ſhun as the plague the *pollutions of the world*,—theſe, like the Maſter whom they follow, are *deſpiſed and rejected of men.* Job xlii. 6. Iſ. xlv. 24.—liii. 3. with Mat. x. 22. Pſ. lxiii. 3. Mat. xxvi. 41. Rom. vii. 24. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

And now, waving the deluſions of wretched man, let us attend to the *only wiſe God*, ſpeaking to us by His word and teaching, that *we are all as an unclean thing, and all our*

our righteouſneſſes as filthy rags; that *they who are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God;* that the *form* without the *power of godlineſs is vain*, yea, *abominable* in His ſight; that in every real Chriſtian *old things are paſſed away, and all things become new;* for the *true worſhipper* is *one inwardly*, who has *a new heart* and a *new ſpirit put within him;* that *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God;* and that God inſtead of ſhewing mercy to them *who know Him not, and obey not the Goſpel*, will *puniſh them with everlaſting deſtruction;* for *it is a fearful thing* (except through the only Mediator) *to fall into the hands of the living God.* Iſ. lxiv. 6. Rom. viii. 8. Iſ. i. 13. with 2 Tim. iii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. ii. 29. with Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 1 John ii. 15. James iv. 4. 2 Theſ. i. 8. Heb. x. 31. Moreover we are aſſured that His ſaints, though reckoned *the filth of the world*, and *defamed* by the *men of it*, are nevertheleſs *precious in his ſight*, the *reſting-place of his love*, and the only perſons upon earth who are poſſeſſed of true wiſdom and a right underſtanding. 1 Cor. iv. 13. Iſ. xliii. 4. Pſ. cxvi. 15, Zeph. iii. 17. Pſ. cxi. 10. And a time will come when thoſe who *now* ſpeak againſt the real Chriſtian, ſhall be conſtrained to acknowledge, in anguiſh of ſpirit, as it is repreſented in Wiſdom v. 3. *This was he whom we had ſometimes in deriſion, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madneſs; and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the ſaints!* All which may convince us that no right, or ſafe *foundation* can be laid in natural talents and abilities: for *except a man be taught of God*, and *born of the Spirit, he can neither ſee, nor enter into His kingdom.* John vi. 45.—iii. 3, 6.

The ſame may be obſerved of the means of grace, and all religious privileges national and particular, in which reſpect we are remarkably favoured by Divine Providence. We are Chriſtians in a general ſenſe, by a national profeſſion, by a ſubjection to the ordinance of Baptiſm, and to the Chriſtian name. And yet nothing is more true than that the nation abounds with infidels, men of corrupt principles and wicked practices, who hate and are aſhamed of the truths which He taught, by whoſe name they are called, who follow the ſame, or worſe courſes than many of the

unbaptized Heathens did; and who, when they go into distant countries, are often a scandal to Pagans, blest with no light from the revealed word, and cause even savages, who have moral honesty and sobriety, to blush at the covetousness, extortion, lewdness, luxury and cruelty of *nominal Christians*. The Christian name is no better than any other name without vital, powerful, practical Christianity. Water Baptism avails us nothing unless we have also the thing signified, or the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, which comprehends "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness;*" for *we are buried with Christ by Baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* Rom. vi. It is an invaluable privilege denied to many, to have the word of inspiration in our native language, and the precious salvation of the Gospel proclaimed in our ears. But if we receive it not in our hearts, feel not its power there, and set it not forth in our lives, what will be our acquisition in the end? We should tremble while we recollect that it will be a more aggravated condemnation. I learn so much from what our Lord said concerning *Capernaum, exalted*, by His presence and ministry, *to heaven*; yet because his testimony was there rejected—*thrust down to hell*; nay, *it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment* than for those who receive not His ministers and His Gospel when sent to them. Mat. xi. 23. Luke x. 12. It may be observed that the *means* of grace, as reading and hearing the word, prayer, baptism, the Lord's supper, &c. are properly called privileges, and we cannot be sufficiently thankful to God for them: but to rest upon the means, assume merit from the observation of them, and make them *causes* of our acceptance is a spiritual prostitution. It is to make *saviours* of them, and to worship them instead of Him to whom they were intended to lead us, by whose mercy we enjoy them, and who alone can bless them to our advantage.

No foundation laid in the works, or righteousness of *men*, will

* Catechism.

will ſupport the ſoul, and ſtand the trial in the great day. And the reaſon is, becauſe all, without any exception, are ſinners, have committed that for which they can never atone; and *God will bring every work into judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.* Ec. xii. 14. Likewiſe *every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.* Mat. xii. 36. The moſt ſecret thoughts, the moſt private defilements of the heart, as well as the expreſſions of the tongue and the actions of the body will be revealed; and where guilt is found remaining upon the ſoul it will be condemned. Who then, knowing this, would venture to reſt the leaſt degree of hope on ſuch a foundation as perſonal obedience, and not rather cry out with one eminent for holineſs in ancient times, *Enter not into judgment with thy ſervant; for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.* Pſ. cxliii. 2. Yet ſalvation by works is the religion to which our proud and corrupt nature is perpetually prone; and nothing is more common than for men to look for acceptance, either in whole or in part, for the ſake of their own doings. It is wonderful with what ſlight materials ſome build for eternity. If they can pay their debts, elude the vigilance of human laws, and maintain a tolerably fair reputation among men, to feed the good opinion they have of themſelves, their mountain ſtands ſtrong, and they ſpeak peace and ſecurity to their ſouls, though the name and ſabbaths of God are habitually profaned by them, the Goſpel, prayer, and godly converſation deſpiſed; drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, and other enormities occaſionally and allowedly practiſed. But this is a cobweb-foundation which the beſom of divine wrath will ſweep into the bottomleſs pit.

Others, like the *Phariſees*, are more circumſpect in their conduct, and walk round the circle of external duties, religious forms and ceremonies with peculiar ſtrictneſs, which they make the ground of their confidence. They are not profane talkers, intemperate, adulterers, extortioners, &c. *as other men are.* On the contrary, their converſation has been ſober and orderly, their attendance on ordinances, and all their religious exerciſes conſtant, their dealings with men fair and upright, their alms not unfrequent; and if *they* are not in the way to heaven, they are rea. to aſk,

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Who then can be ſaved? I anſwer, *None* on the *foundation of works.* Chriſtians are indeed *called* to *holineſs;* and if not found in the way of it, lovers of God and of His commandments, will be found hypocrites: but woe will be to them, who finally depend on their obedience, and *exalt themſelves* with high notions of their own goodneſs and virtue; for *they ſhall be abaſed.* Luke xviii. 14. They are ſeeking juſtification from that very *law* which condemns the whole human race. This is a *ſpiritual law* claiming *the whole heart* for God, and *requiring truth in the inward parts,*—a *perfect* conformity to it in the *mind* as well as in the outward conduct. Rom. vii. 14. Mat. xxii. 37. Pſ. li. 6. It forbids covetouſneſs, pride, luſt, envy, diſcontent, hatred, malice, and love of the world, as much as drunkenneſs and adultery, and condemns for every tranſgreſſion; for *whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* James ii. 10. Therefore, *as many as are of the works of the law,* (ſeeking eternal life by their obedience to that) *are under the curſe: for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxvii. 26. This law demands a *perfect nature;* but *we,* alas! as the word of God affirms, *are all by nature children of wrath,* becauſe *ſhapen in iniquity and conceived in ſin,* and becauſe we have *all gone aſtray from God as loſt ſheep, and have turned every one to his own way.* And ſo entire is our departure from God, that we have no true deſire to return to Him till He is pleaſed to *make us willing in the day of His power,* to *open our eyes,* ſhew us the way, and bring us back to the *good Shepherd and Biſhop of our ſouls.* Eph. ii. 3. Pſ. li. 5.—cx. 3. Iſ. liii. 6. Acts xxvi. 18. 1 Pet. ii. 25. 'Till this bleſſed change is begun we wander in dark and ſinful courſes, being in that *carnal mind* which *is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:* and whatever works and duties we may perform, yet the ſin of truſting to them, the pride of ſelf-righteouſneſs alone is as a worm which devours the foundation, and will let fall the whole building we labour to erect. For God *reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.* James iv. 6. His word affords no promiſe of favour but to the *humble ſelf-condemning* ſinner. And were we duly impreſſed with the ſpiritual extent, holineſs, juſtice and goodneſs of His law, we ſhould ſtand out no longer

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againſt conviction, but with a *perfect* and *upright* believer of old, we ſhould be *vile* in our own ſight, and with a great Apoſtle confeſs *that in us (that is, in our fleſh) there dwelleth* NO GOOD THING. Rom. vii. 12, 18. Job. xl. 4. And though we profeſs to reſt our hopes only in ſome degree upon our duties and works, or make them qualifications for the grace and mercy of the Saviour, we are acting the part of the *fooliſh man who built his houſe upon the ſand.* Mat. vii. What the event of his folly was, you know. This foundation is unſtable, ſhifting, treacherous. It will not bear even the hand of him that now examines it; much leſs can it ſtand the *ſtorm*, the *flood*, and the *tempeſt* of the ALMIGHTY'S ARM. And whether men are convinced now, or not, it will be manifeſt in that day, when HE *will lay judgment to the line, and righteouſneſs to the plummet, and the hail ſhall ſweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters ſhall overflow the hiding place.* Iſ. xxviii. 17.

Secondly, I am to obſerve what the *true foundation is*, and that this is already *laid. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is* JESUS CHRIST. What a mercy is it, that we are not here left in the dark! How unſpeakable the goodneſs of God in ſo clearly revealing the foundation of a ſinner's hope and everlaſting ſalvation! It is JESUS CHRIST—HE, and HE *only*; HE, and *no other with* HIM; HE, and not our works and duties, is the SAVIOUR. *This is the Stone which was ſet at nought of the builders*, (the falſe teachers in His day) *which is become the* HEAD *of the corner. Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* Acts iv. 11, 12. How expreſs and deciſive are the inſpired writings on this moſt important ſubject! The ſalvation of which Chriſt is the author is perfect, complete, everlaſting, and free to the ſinner, *of grace, and not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt.* Heb. v. 9. Eph. ii. 9. It is ſo ordered, that no room whatever is left for ſelf-exaltation on the part of man, whether we conſider this ſalvation in the matter of it, or the way in which it is applied. The whole material cauſe of our juſtification before God is ſolely what Chriſt did and ſuffered in our ſtead. And as I obſerved that the law required a *perfect nature*, ſo ſo we have that alſo in Chriſt. Hence He was called by

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the angel *that* HOLY THING—wonderfully conceived in the Virgin's womb, by the *Holy Ghoſt coming upon her, and the power of the Higheſt overſhadowing her.* Luke i. He *fulfilled the law* for us, and bore the curſe of it on His croſs, where *He put away ſin by the ſacrifice of Himſelf*, and as was foretold by prophets and teſtified by apoſtles, *brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs for the juſtification* of His people. Gal. iii. 13. Heb. ix. 26. Dan. ix. 24. Iſ. liii. 11. Rom. x. 4. Thus He really *finiſhed the work which the Father gave Him to do.* John xvii. 4. And as to the application of His merits to us, it is entirely by an act of ſovereign grace and divine power: for *no man can come to Chriſt*, (believe in Him) *except the Father draw him.* John vi. 44. The *faith* by which we *receive Him*, is declared to be the *gift*, and *of the operation of God:* and therefore not produced by any effort of the will and power of man:* *But as many as received Him, to them* GAVE HE POWER *to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on His name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* Eph. ii. 8. Col. ii. 12. John i. 12. This doctrine leaves no room for boaſting on our part; but a great deal for humiliation, prayer and praiſe.

If it be inquired how Chriſt was qualified for ſuch an aſtoniſhing work as the ſalvation of millions of loſt and helpleſs creatures, the conſideration of His *Divinity* affords a ſatisfactory anſwer. The moſt exalted and glorious of *created* beings muſt have utterly failed in ſo arduous an attempt, as quite incompetent to pay a *ranſom* for *ſouls*, and having no righteouſneſs to ſpare for the juſtification of others: but Chriſt, as God *in our fleſh*, was able to do both. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Mat. i. 23. From hence follows, that Socinians, Arians, and all who deny the proper Divinity of Chriſt, cannot by their principles *build* upon Him as a foundation; and are generally offended at the doctrines of human inſufficiency, imputed righteouſneſs, and ſalvation by grace. Being ſtrong in themſelves they feel no need of an Almighty Saviour. And as to ſuch as hold His *Divinity* in *words*, and yet depend on their *own power* and *works* for acceptance, they might, with equal ſafety, and more

* See the 10th article of the Church of England.

more conſiſtency, profeſs Socinianiſm at once. It is the ſame to them (in reſpect of ſalvation) whether Chriſt were God or man; whether He obeyed and ſuffered, or not; *for if righteouſneſs* (a juſtifying one) *come by the law* (where they are ſeeking it) *then Chriſt is dead in vain.* Gal. ii. 21. All *ſelf-righteous* perſons are in fact enemies to the *divine perſon* of Jeſus, becauſe they reject that *perfect* atonement and *full* ſalvation without which no ſufficient reaſon can be aſſigned why it was needful the Meſſiah ſhould be God; and conſequently in their hearts they deny that HE *is come in the fleſh.* 2 John 7. But if we really believe in His divine nature, let us be ſo conſiſtent as to build our hopes on Him only; for this is the reaſon why He is all-ſufficient to ſupport His *Church*, ſo that *the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, and an *everlaſting foundation, the root of the righteous which ſhall not be moved.* Mat. xvi. 18. Prov. x. 25. —xii. 3. with Rev. xxii. 16. Here is a firm and durable baſis for the ſoul to reſt upon; but no where elſe; nay a terrible curſe, ſpiritual barrenneſs and woful ruin are denounced on all who rely on any arm but His: *Thus ſaith the Lord, Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord. For he ſhall be like the heath in the deſert, and ſhall not ſee when good cometh, but ſhall inhabit the parched places in the wilderneſs, in a ſalt land and not inhabited.* Jer. xvii. 5, 6. To depend on Chriſt Himſelf, if He were not Jehovah, would be to depart from the Lord; and to rely on our own ſtrength and goodneſs for ſalvation is the ſame dreadful folly; and a proof that ſuch are not yet ſettled on the immoveable *Rock of ages.* Let me exhort all therefore, who hear me this day, if they expect ſalvation at all, to conſider where they are looking for it? And eſpecially, as the preſent life is ſhort and moſt uncertain, to labour without delay after a well-grounded hope,—ſuch as will ſtand the teſt of God's word now, and the judgment which is at hand. And to this end be inſtant in prayer, humbling and abaſing yourſelves before that infinite Holy One, who though *He knoweth the proud afar off* (vouchſafing no bleſſed ray of his favour and preſence to them) *yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly, even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at His word; and is good to the ſoul that ſeeketh Him.* Pſ. cxxxviii. 6. Iſ. lxvi. 2. Lam. iii. 25. An error in the

foundation

foundation is of fatal conſequence. Frail and imperfect man may build unſuitable materials upon the true foundation,—contend for uſeleſs ceremonies, or hold ſome weak and incongruous opinions comparable to *wood, hay, ſtubble*, and *yet himſelf be ſaved*, tho' with ſome difficulty and loſs, as it were *by fire*. But if we are not *bottomed* on Chriſt, we have nothing that is ſound or durable, no *gold, ſilver*, or *precious ſtones*, in the whole building, it is neceſſary to begin all our religion anew. 1 Cor. iii. 12, &c.

There is need often to remind men that they are not left to invent new ways of recommending themſelves to God. The *foundation* on which alone we can ſtand before him is already *laid*. It was laid by an infinitely wiſe Architect, as appears from that glorious prophecy, Iſaiah xxviii. 16. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a ſtone, a tried ſtone, a precious corner ſtone, a ſure foundation; he that believeth ſhall not make haſte.* The paſſage is applied to Chriſt by the Apoſtles Paul and Peter; and diſplays the excellency of His perſon, the perfection of His work, and the ſafety of the Church which He upholds; and alſo teaches that we are built upon Him by *faith*, the ſame truth which is ſo often inſiſted on, and ſo clearly opened in the Goſpel. *He that believeth ſhall not make haſte*, or flee away, as in terror and confuſion. No trials, difficulties, dangers, or enemies whatever, ſhall force the *believer* to quit his ſtation, or *ſeparate him from the love of Chriſt*. Rom. viii. 39.—x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 6. This *ſure foundation* was laid in the divine counſel from all eternity; and in the promiſes, prophecies, ſacrifices, and ceremonial inſtitutions of the old diſpenſation, on which I muſt not enlarge at preſent. Only it may be remarked, that as the two eyes of a man repreſent any ſingle object as one, and not as two or more, to the beholder's view; ſo the two volumes of the Old and New Teſtaments diſcover *one* Chriſt to the believer's ſight, *one ground* of hope, *one cauſe* and *way* of ſalvation. And ſuch as believe now *are built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt Himſelf being the chief corner ſtone*, connecting as well as ſuſtaining the whole ſpiritual ſtructure, in which *there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for they are all one in Chriſt Jeſus*. Eph. ii. 20.

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Gal. iii. 28. Not the Apoſtles, and we who are called Chriſtians only; but *Abraham believed in Him for righteouſneſs, Jacob waited for his ſalvation, Job knew that his Redeemer lived*, and Moſes with dying lips directed the Church to reſt on Him alone for help and ſafety, aſſuring them that the *Eternal God was their refuge, and underneath were the everlaſting arms*. Gen. xv. 6. with Rom. iv. Gen. xlix. 18. Job xix. 25. Deut. xxxiii. 27. Chriſt alſo is *laid miniſterially* by every faithful preacher, as the only foundation for ſinners to build upon for eternal life; nor is it poſſible for miniſters to *lay* any beſides *Him* with advantage to themſelves or others; but ſhould rather *determine*, as Paul did when he firſt viſited the polite, the *learned* Corinthians, *to know nothing*, as a foundation for acceptance with God, *but Jeſus Chriſt, and Him crucified*. 1 Cor. ii. 1.

Laſtly, I am to conſider ſome excellent properties of this foundation which may encourage us to build upon it, and from which we may judge whether we have done ſo or not. The excellencies of Chriſt are ſo various and admirable, that the time would fail me ſhould I ſeek only to enumerate thoſe which are recorded in His word; and much more ſhould I attempt to ſet them forth in their diſtinct fulneſs and peculiar glory. They are more than any tongue can deſcribe, or the moſt enlightened mind adequately conceive.

Through original and actual ſin we are loſt and helpleſs: but in Chriſt is treaſured up all we can poſſibly want for preſent deliverance and happineſs, and for everlaſting ſalvation.

He is a foundation for *pardon*. We have all *ſinned*, and *the wages of ſin is death*—eternal baniſhment from His preſence, *whoſe favour is life*. Rom. vi. 23. Not oceans of tears, were it in our power to weep in ſuch profuſion; not millions of lives, if we had them to lay down, could put away the guilt of the leaſt ſin from before Him, whoſe truth and juſtice are inviolable. But behold the amazing love of God! *He hath purchaſed the Church with His own blood. God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto Himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them*: and *He hath loved us, and given Himſelf for us, and waſhed us from our ſins in His*

own blood. Acts xx. 28. 2 Cor. v. 19. Rev. i. 5. Conſider alſo, that *thus it behoved*, or was needful that He ſhould *ſuffer*. Luke xxiv. 46. Why was it needful? Free, everlaſting, unſpeakable love to the worthleſs and miſerable made it ſo. For we had *deſtroyed*, and could not *help ourſelves*. Hoſ. xiii. 9. And becauſe He would have mercy, and His eye was upon us to pity, to ſpare, and to redeem, therefore *He laid down His life for the ſheep*. John x. 15. He truly *bore the ſins* of all that ever did, or ever ſhall believe in Him, and bore them *away*; ſo that *as far as the eaſt is from the weſt, ſo far hath He removed our tranſgreſſions from us*. Pſ. ciii. 12. And being both All-wiſe and Almighty He could not poſſibly fail of accompliſhing the end for which he ſuffered. What a foundation then is here for pardon! As ſurely as Jeſus *died*, ſo ſurely is the *believer waſhed* from all guilt and *ſpotleſs* before God. Num. xxiii. 21. Cant. iv. 7. Eph. v. 26, 27. And it may be obſerved by the way, that in this view of the Divine Perſon, dying love, and atoning blood of Chriſt, there is a foundation for genuine *repentance* and *godly ſorrow*, or a mourning for ſin as committed againſt infinite holineſs and goodneſs, and againſt love wonderful beyond all conception. And to ſuch we are commanded to *ſpeak comfortably*,—even to *them that mourn*, aſſuring them that the riſen Saviour *gives them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs*. Iſ. lxi. 3. You that are inquiring after the way to the divine mercy, and *putting your mouth in the duſt, if ſo be their may be hope*, where, O where ſhould you look but to *the Lamb of God who taketh away the ſin of the world*, and whoſe *blood cleanſeth us from all ſin*? Lam. iii. 29. John i. 29. 1 John i. 7. You who are grievouſly diſtreſſed at the lengths you have gone in ſin, and ready to faint at the thoughts of your numberleſs backſlidings, behold a ſure foundation of hope, even the truth of Him who declares He *will heal the backſlidings* of His *returning* people, and *love them freely*; and that *all manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven*. Jer. iii. 22. Hoſ. xiv. 4. Mat. xii. 31. You who are drawing dreadful concluſions againſt your ſouls, whilſt you conſider the abundant aggravations of your offences, O lend an ear to Jehovah Himſelf condeſcending to reaſon with you on the ſuperabundant efficacy of His atonement: *Come now, and let us reaſon together*,

gether, ſaith the Lord; though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool. Iſ. i. 18.

Chriſt is the only foundation for *righteouſneſs*. By *nature* there is *none righteous, none that doeth good, no not one.* Pſ. liii. Rom. iii. We are *corrupt trees*, which can produce nothing but *evil fruit* 'till *grafted* into Him by a *faith working by love*,* when we are made *trees of righteouſneſs, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.* Mat. vii. 17. Iſ. lxi. 3. It is a fundamental error to ſuppoſe that Chriſt came only to put us into a way of juſtifying ourſelves by our own works; or that after we are juſtified by faith, we muſt ſtand, or fall, as our obedience to the *law* is perfect, or otherwiſe. We *ſtand*, not by the *law*, but by *faith*; and are perfect no other way than through that *comelineſs* which He is pleaſed to *put upon us*, even his own righteouſneſs,—*the righteouſneſs of God which, by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, is unto all, and upon all them that* BELIEVE. Rom. xi. 20,—iii. 22. Ezek. xvi. 14. The word of truth teaches that Chriſt Himſelf is *righteouſneſs*, yea, *everlaſting righteouſneſs* to us, that *we are complete in Him, that all who believe are juſtified from all things, not condemned, ſhall never periſh*, but *have everlaſting life.* Jer. xxiii. 6. Col. ii. 10. Acts xiii. 39. John iii. 16, 18. And it is hardly poſſible to be more expreſs than the Apoſtle is in Rom. x. 4. where he declares that Chriſt *is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* Even under the *law* the ſervants of God had clear aſſurances of this moſt comfortable truth. *Chriſt's righteouſneſs* is that in which David ſo often glories, declaring that he will *make mention of no other*; and in the believing apprehenſion of which Iſaiah ſings, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of ſalvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs.* Pſ. xxxi. 1.—xxxv. 24, 28.—li. 14.—lxxi. 15, 16, &c. Iſ. lxi. 10. Such as are looking to themſelves, or the law, for a juſtifying righteouſneſs, may conſider what St. Paul was before his converſion, how ſtrict in the obſervation of all religious ceremonies, how conſcientious in the diſcharge of all known

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* See the 13th Article of our Church.

duties, how unimpeachable in his moral character among men. He informs us that he *had lived in all good conſcience before God*, and that *touching the righteouſneſs which is of the law* (according to the knowledge he then had of it) he was *blameleſs*. Acts xxiii. 1. But when that law was opened to him in its ſpiritual extent and purity, by which he was brought to a ſenſe of his inward corruptions, all his former hopes immediately died away, and he confeſſed himſelf the *chief of ſinners, ſold under ſin, and counted all loſs*, that he *might win Chriſt, and be found in Him, not having his own righteouſneſs which was of the law, but that which is through the faith of Chriſt*. Rom. vii. 9. 14. Phil. iii. 4—9. And let none of us deceive ourſelves by imagining that we are better by nature than St. Paul was; but rather ſubmit to the divine truth, leſt we finally periſh with all the adverſaries of it. And if any are convinced that there is neither worthineſs nor goodneſs in themſelves, and deſire to be found in Chriſt, behold a foundation for *glorying* and *confidence*, even in His preſence, who *is of purer eyes than to behold evil*! Let them come and *glory in the Lord*, who *will in no wiſe caſt them out*. Hab. i. 13. 1 Cor. i. 31. John vi. 37. Chriſt will be *the Lord their righteouſneſs*. So entirely will He cover them with the *white raiment* of His own *obedience*, that *the ſhame of their nakedneſs* ſhall not even *appear*. Rom. v. 19. Rev. iii. 18. And is there ought in earth or heaven we can reaſonably deſire beſides Him for our *juſtification* before God? Surely not; ſeeing that God *hath made* HIM *to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in* HIM. 2 Cor. v. 21.

There is no other foundation than Chriſt for true *wiſdom*, He being *Wiſdom* itſelf, and the *light of the world*, in reſpect both of creation and redemption. John i. 9.—viii. 12. 1 Cor. i. 24. Till we know Him we *grope* in ſpiritual darkneſs, and know nothing as we ought to know, either concerning God, or ourſelves, or the law, or the gospel, or the world. *The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is given* only *in the perſon of* Jeſus Chriſt; and to them that *believe* in Him. It *ſhines in their hearts* by an act of His ſovereign will and Almighty power, who, in the beginning *commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs*. 2 Cor. iv.

In Chriſt are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 3. When we are brought to receive and delight in His teſtimony, then we who were *ſometimes darkneſs are light in the Lord*. Eph. v. 8. When this *Sun of righteouſneſs ariſes* upon our ſouls *with healing in His wings*, then the night of error and folly, and the gloomy ſhades of uncertainty are diſperſed, and we are *made wiſe unto ſalvation through faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus*. Mal. iv. 2. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Then *an underſtanding is given us to know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God and eternal life*. 1 John v. 20. Would you attain to this *wiſdom which is more precious than rubies?* It is Chriſt who beſtows it: *He layeth up ſound wiſdom for the righteous*. And *if thou crieſt after knowledge, and lifteſt up thy voice for underſtanding: if thou ſeekeſt her as ſilver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hid treaſures; then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God*. Prov. ii. Would you increaſe in true wiſdom? Study to know more of Chriſt; of His perſon, offices, love, and of the fulneſs and freeneſs of His ſalvation, and *walk as children of the light*. Then ſhall your way be *the path of the juſt, which is as the ſhining light that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*. Prov. iv. 18.

Chriſt is a foundation for *life*. He is the *life* as well as the *light of men*. John xi. 25. 'Till we are united to Him we are *dead in law*, as under the condemnation of it; and *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, as under the guilt and power of them. Eph. ii. 1. But *he that believeth is paſſed from death unto life*, being *forgiven all treſpaſſes*, and *quickened* to a new life of faith and righteouſneſs *by the Spirit of Him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead*. John v. 24. Col. ii. 13. Rom. viii. 11. Hence believers are exhorted not to *yield their members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin; but to yield themſelves unto God* (in the exerciſe of all holineſs) *as thoſe that are alive from the dead*. Rom. vi. 13. Our ſpiritual life, the ſource of it, and the power of deriving it is not in ourſelves; but it is hid *with Chriſt in God*. Col. iii. 3. That is the reaſon why it cannot be loſt; and why we ſhould continually ſeek it where it is. They are happieſt and holieſt who wait moſt upon Chriſt. *Bleſſed is the man that heareth Him, watching daily at His gates, waiting at the poſts*

of His doors. For whoſo findeth Him findeth life, and ſhall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that ſinneth againſt Him wrongeth his own ſoul: all they that hate Him love death. Prov. viii. 34. To the ſame purpoſe the Apoſtle Peter repreſents Chriſt as *a living ſtone*, and all believers as *lively ſtones built* upon Him *a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt.* 1 Pet. ii. 4. The life they have is all derived from Chriſt the *foundation;* and their ſervices are *acceptable* becauſe ſpringing from *faith in Him*, and done ſolely to the *glory of God.* Not one of theſe *lively ſtones* can be ſeparated from the building, except the *foundation* ſhould fail, which is impoſſible; for Chriſt is *alive for evermore, and has the keys of death and of hell:* and *becauſe he lives they ſhall live alſo.* Rev. i. 18. John xiv. 19. It is His good pleaſure, who has *all power in heaven and* in *earth*, to *give them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of His hand.* Mat. xxviii. 18. John x. 28.

Chriſt is therefore a foundation for all *ſpiritual ſtrength, grace*, and *ſanctification*. The moſt eminent ſaints have confeſſed their *own* abſolute weakneſs and inability; that they were *without ſtrength, not ſufficient of themſelves to think any thing as of themſelves:* for *the way of man is not in himſelf; it is not in man that walketh to direct his ſteps.* Rom. v. 6. 2 Cor. iii. v. Jer. x. 23. The King of ſaints aſſures us, that *without Him we can do nothing;* for *as the branch cannot bear fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine; no more can we except we abide in Him.* John xv. 4, 5. So that Chriſt muſt be received by us, not only as the cauſe of our juſtification before the Father; but as a *head* of influence, by faith in whom we, the members of His *myſtical body*, partake of thoſe *gifts* which He, as Mediator, *received for rebellious* men. Pſ. lxviii. 18. Hence all that *believe* are ſaid to *have received of His fulneſs, and grace for grace.* John i. 16. And as the *promiſes* relating to grace and glory *are all Yea and Amen in Chriſt*, ſo they are certain to all who are *one with Him.* 2 Cor. i. 20. This being well conſidered, may open to us ſome of the beauties of that celebrated paſſage, where the Apoſtle obſerves, that *Chriſt is made unto us of God, wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification and redemption.* 1 Cor. i. 30. We cannot ſtand againſt our adverſaries

verſaries a moment by our own power: and it is neceſſary to know this, that we may live upon Chriſt for *ſtrength* as well as *righteouſneſs*. Iſ. xlv. 24. And we are accordingly commanded to be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of His might*; and *to put on the whole armour of God, which is Jeſus Chriſt* Himſelf in all His offices. Eph. vi. 10. with Rom. xiii. 14. He can never fail them that truſt in Him; therefore, *truſt ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength*. Iſ. xxvi. 4.

It muſt follow then, that Chriſt is a foundation for *perſonal righteouſneſs*, and univerſal holineſs in heart and life; for all *purity* and *truth*, *goodneſs* and *virtue*; yea, ſuch a foundation as will ſupport none but thoſe who are made *holy*. We cannot be built upon Him but by the *workmanſhip* of the Holy Spirit, who alſo dwells in us, *creating us unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them*. Eph. ii. 10. We ſhould not be ignorant of this great truth, which fully proves, that ſuch as ſpeak *evil* of the doctrines of *free grace*, and ſay, they leave a *liberty to ſin* have never underſtood them. *Know ye not*, (ſays the Apoſtle in this chapter) *that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him ſhall God deſtroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*. All the members of the *true Church* conſtitute but one *temple*, ſupported by Chriſt the *foundation*, and *holy unto the Lord, in whom they are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*. Eph. 2. 22. From which it is clear, that ſuch as were never favoured with the reviving preſence and renewing power of the Holy Ghoſt, have never believed in Chriſt to any ſaving purpoſe. Rom. viii. 9. And in whomſoever the Spirit of God dwells, there will, and muſt be, in a greater, or leſs degree, *the fruit of the Spirit, which is in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth*. Eph. v. 9.

Chriſt is conſequently a foundation for *comfort, peace, happineſs* and *joy*, ſuch as *never entered into the hearts* of any who are ſtrangers to Him, and "which the world can neither give, nor take away." *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace*. Gal. v. To *truſt* to ſenſible comforts (leaving the fountain for the ſtream) is deceitful. To pretend

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to any which are not authorized by the written word, nor found in the experience of God's ſervants recorded there, may be called *enthuſiaſm*. But to deny all inward feeling and experience of the power of religion in the ſoul, is infidelity unmaſked, the mark of one that is *wretched, blind*, and a *captive*, and *knows it not*, having never *taſted that the Lord is gracious*, nor enjoyed the *freedom with which He makes believers free*. John viii. 32. with Gal. v. 1, 6. All *real* Chriſtians have *the love of God ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt given unto them*; are entitled and commanded to *rejoice in the Lord always*; to *let the peace of God (which paſſeth all underſtanding) rule in their hearts, to the which alſo they are* CALLED *in one body*; for CHRIST, *who is their peace, gives them everlaſting conſolation through grace*; and *believing in Him, they rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*. Rom. v. 5. Phil. iv. 4, 7. Col. iii. 15. Eph. ii. 14. 2 Theſ. ii. 16. 1 Pet. i. 8. But to ſuppoſe we may have theſe ſpecial graces and bleſſings, without knowing, or feeling them, is too abſurd to need a refutation.

Chriſt is alſo a foundation for *patience* and *tranquility* under trials, troubles and ſufferings, perſecutions and oppoſition from the world; and for our certain perſeverance, in ſpite of all difficulties, to the kingdom of His immediate preſence and glory. If you are *built* upon *Him*, and *rooted and grounded in love*, there is not a trial, or affliction you can meet with but ſhall ſerve to fix you more firmly, and unite you more cloſely to this *tried ſtone* and *ſure foundation*. If ye are *Chriſt's all things are yours*,—even the world with all its malice, and death with all its terrors—converted into bleſſings and matter of joy: for *we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpoſe*. 1 Cor. iii. 22. Mat. v. 12. Rom. viii. 28. And if indeed we are bleſt with this precious knowledge, we ſhall perceive that there is more reaſon for thankfulneſs than complaint, or murmuring under afflictions, ſince theſe are all appointed by a merciful hand, needful corrections of His love, ſent for the furtherance and eſtabliſhment of our faith, and tending to the glory of His own name, and the benefit of the church: for *whom the Lord loveth He chaſteneth; and ſcourgeth every ſon whom He receiveth*. Heb. xii. 6. As to the oppoſition we now meet with

with from the world, what is that compared with the tribulations endured by our forefathers, ſo many of whom were obliged to *reſiſt*, even *unto blood*, *ſtriving againſt ſin* and the world? We ſhall probably have to encounter a few *hard ſpeeches* from the ungodly; a little deriſion from the ſcorners, who know not, and therefore value not the *wiſdom which is from above*: but in a *deſpiſed*, *derided*, and meekly ſuffering *Saviour* we have a foundation from which to *love* and *pray* for theſe our unhappy adverſaries; *becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow His ſteps, who did no ſin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He ſuffered, He threatened not, but committed Himſelf to Him that judgeth righteouſly.* 1 Pet. ii. 21. The bleſſed period will ſoon arrive, when HE will *wipe away* all reproach from the characters, and *all tears from the eyes of the righteous*, who *ſhall* then *ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father.* Mat. xiii. 43. Nothing can prevent their final glorification there, becauſe they are *purchaſed* with *divine blood*, upheld by his *power*, *who made heaven and earth*, and *taught by* His *good Spirit* to truſt in Him only, to *take up their croſs* daily, *deny themſelves, and follow Him.* Pſ. cxxi. 1, &c.

To ſum up the whole, and give the ſubſtance of what has been delivered in one ſingle paſſage,—

CHRIST IS ALL. Col. iii. 11.

In Him we have *all things* neceſſary to our preſent and eternal ſalvation; but in ourſelves *nothing*. Have we learnt this leſſon ſo ſtrange to unſanctified reaſon? Are we convinced by certain experience in our hearts, that we have no hope, or ſtrength but in Chriſt; no deſire in reſpect of juſtification, but to be *found in* Him, *waſhed* in His *blood*, and *covered* with His *righteouſneſs;* no ambition prevailing within us but that of living to His glory, *ſerving* Him *with our bodies and our ſpirits which are His*; and thus *ſhewing forth the praiſes of him, who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light?* 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 9. *Search the Scriptures.* It is the Lord's charge, in whoſe name I ſpeak. *Examine and prove yourſelves* by the infallible oracles of truth, that you may know whether you have *receiv-*

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ed Christ Jesus the Lord, or not; and whether you be *rooted and built up in him and stablished in the faith.* Col. ii. 6. If so, you are blessed with all His faithful people upon earth, who are all *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ:* and when His enemies to whom He is here *a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence,* shall perish under the terrible weight of his justice, ye shall be called into the glorious temple above, to *go no more out;* but to dwell for ever in His presence, where there *is fulness of joy; and at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.* 1 Pet. ii. 8. Mat. xxi. 44. Rev. iii. 12. Ps. xvi. 11.

BRITISH MUSEUM 4 NO 73